

## Achieving Chartered Status: Case studies from other professions

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### 1. Introduction:

In some professions, chartered status has been awarded to individual members for a very long time. The term Chartered Accountant has been in use since the mid nineteenth century with Chartered Surveyors and Chartered Directors following in the early twentieth century. But for others, obtaining a Royal Charter and introducing chartered status for individual members has been a more recent undertaking. In this paper we will look at two such Institutes – The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and the Institute of Chartered Foresters (Chartered Foresters).

Chartered Foresters received their Royal Charter in 1982, and CIEEM achieved the same status in 2013. CIfA became a Chartered Institute in 2014 and have now proposed introducing Chartered Archaeologist as a new individual member grade. Chartered Archaeologist will be open to all, including anyone who can demonstrate MCIfA skills. Existing MCIfAs will be able to apply at launch.

We have tested members' support for the principle of Chartered Archaeologist in an earlier consultation. Three quarters of members who responded to that consultation were in favour.

Chartered status is the most rigorously tested level of accreditation any professional body can award its members. It is a formal, internationally recognised and externally verified mark of professionalism. Chartered status is not given automatically. It is not an honorific title given in recognition of length of service or high standing in a profession, nor is it necessarily a measure of seniority.

Our aim is for Chartered Archaeology to deliver:

- An internationally recognised and externally verified title for the archaeology profession
- Greater recognition for archaeologists
- Parity with other chartered professions
- Confidence for clients and other stakeholders about a person's abilities and professionalism
- Assessment of a members' professional ethics
- A strong signal that the profession of archaeology is working for public benefit

Our proposals reflect the approaches taken by other chartered bodies, tailored to the needs of the archaeology profession. In this paper we discuss how chartered status was introduced in ecology and forestry.

## 2. Chartered Ecologist

CIEEM is the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. CIEEM established the Register of Chartered Ecologists on 1st April 2013 and is the only organisation able to award the title Chartered Ecologist. Chartered Ecologists are professionals who use their knowledge, experience and influence to promote and advance ecology as an applied discipline. They may work or have worked in local or national government, consultancy, the voluntary sector, statutory agencies, industry or academia.

Ecologists are professionals with expertise in the study of the interaction of organisms and their environment. Ecologists often specialise in habitat types, e.g. freshwater, terrestrial marine, etc. Environmental management professionals ensure ecosystem services are protected and maintained. Chartered Ecologists are at the forefront of work to protect and enhance the natural environment.

Jason Reeves, Policy & Communications Manager at CIEEM explains that, “the introduction of Chartered Ecologist has given CIEEM the opportunity to create a new professional standard, which will be widely recognised and valued. To that end, the process to become a Chartered Ecologist has been designed to be thorough, robust and rigorous”.

In order to establish the Register of Chartered Ecologists there have been a number of tasks that needed to be undertaken, including: determining the eligibility criteria, agreeing the competence standard and developing both the assessment and application processes.

The assessment process is a combination of desk-based review of applicant information and a Professional Review Interview. CIEEM Past-Presidents and Fellows were invited to apply first in order to trial the process and also to create the initial assessor pool necessary, as there is no grandparenting process. This trial was a great success with excellent feedback from the applicants resulting in a few small process tweaks.

One Fellow remarked that the form was “... similar to completing an application form for a job...a very important job!”

On being awarded Chartered Ecologist status, one CIEEM member commented: “...delighted to have been accorded this new professional recognition. I expect that Chartered Ecologists will now rank with other chartered professions for our scientific knowledge, managerial competencies and practical experience. As the impacts of climate change and biodiversity loss intensify in coming decades, Chartered Ecologists will be vital for helping society cope with them.”

Another CIEEM member shared her thoughts, “I find ecology an ever challenging and exciting sector to be part of. I think that through this chartered status that an ecologists role in influencing future developments will go from strength to strength, keeping us at the forefront of decision making to not only allow development to proceed but to also protect and enhance the natural environment for future generations.”

“I felt the Register of Chartered Ecologists would be an important milestone for the profession, having been developed specifically to recognise high standards of practice and help raise the profile of ecology amongst other professions,” noted another CIEEM member. “The more members who are chartered the more these qualifications will matter.”

This CIEEM member commented, “For a long time ecologists have struggled in the wider sector to be recognised as anything more than greenies or tree huggers! So to finally be able to be a part of a Chartered Institute with Chartered status really appealed to me, and I applied as soon as possible.”

The Register opened to CIEEM full members for the period 30 September to 31 October 2013. Interviews took place in early December 2013 and successful applicants being announced in January 2014. New Chartered Ecologists entering the Register are announced on a quarterly basis.

### 3. Chartered Forester and Chartered Arboriculturist

Another interesting profession from which we can learn much about the introduction of individual chartered status is forestry and arboriculture.

The Institute of Chartered Foresters, or Chartered Foresters for short, is the professional body for foresters and arboriculturists in the UK. Like CIEEM for ecology, Chartered Foresters is the only body to offer the Chartered Forester and Chartered Arboriculturist titles.

Forestry is the science and craft of creating, managing, using, conserving, and repairing forests, woodlands, and associated resources. Arboriculture is the cultivation, management, and study of individual trees, shrubs, vines, and other perennial woody plants.

The Institute regulates standards, provides and support and guidance to members and others and training to students and tree professionals seeking to develop their careers in the forestry and arboricultural industry.

The Institute has over 1,800 members who practice forestry, arboriculture and related disciplines in the private sector, central and local government, research councils and universities and colleges throughout the UK.

Chartered Foresters received their Royal Charter in 1982 (for Chartered Forester) and launched Chartered Arboriculturist in 2007. They are awards that recognise professional competence and adherence to a code of conduct, through a professional assessment.

Just over 50% of members of the Institute of Chartered Foresters are chartered.

The top three responses why foresters and arboriculturists become chartered are to demonstrate professional credibility, to progress their careers and in some cases to earn more money. These reasons differ in weighting depending who you speak with. For example, Chartered Forester in early career stages versus those nearing retirement, or those work in the public sector and those in the private sector, may answer differently.

Forestry, the Institute of Chartered Foresters and its members are increasingly in the public eye. Dr Stuart Glen, Member Services Director at Chartered Forester explains further, *“Our members are expected to publicly demonstrate their commitment to on-going professional development. In many ways, it’s no longer enough to have the appropriate knowledge. Our members must be able to demonstrate that they can apply it to the everyday situations they face. Chartered status is therefore a badge of excellence with international recognition. Externally, and internally within the member’s organisation, chartered status denotes the member’s standing within the profession”*.

Stuart goes on the note that, *“for many members, chartered status provides parity with other professionals, especially architects, landscape architects, engineers, surveyors, planners and environmental scientists, etc”*.

The Institute of Chartered Foresters believes that chartered status is an assurance for employers, clients and the wider public that its members are competent professionals.

*“Our mantra at the Institute is to champion professionalism in forestry and arboriculture in the UK and chartered status is key to this”*, notes Stuart Glen, going on to say, *“regrettably, our industry still has ‘cowboys’ getting hold of a chainsaw and advertising themselves as a tree surgeon on lamp posts or door to door”*. Parity and recognition across professions is highly important to many Chartered Forester members. Elevating the profession of forestry and arboriculture means that those without professional accreditation are less likely to be chosen by clients.

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Introducing the Chartered Ecologist member grade has given CIEEM the opportunity to create a new professional standard. This is improving the profile and status of the ecology profession. Because of this, CIEEM is more able to influence and in some cases challenge policy and legislation, which has a positive impact on the natural environment and public benefit.

At Chartered Foresters, they believe that individual chartered status is an assurance for employers, clients and the wider public that its members are competent professionals. Parity with leading chartered professions, through the introduction of individual chartered status, delivers this assurance.

#### 4. What can CifA learn?

These examples show two relatively recent attempts to build a Chartered profession and develop a Chartered grade in parallel fields which share many similarities with archaeology. In both examples there are benefits to the profession and to individual members, to clients and to the public, through external verification, recognition and parity.

CifA's intent and process towards these goals mirror those of the CIEEM and Chartered Foresters, particularly in the following ways:

- **Criteria and assessment processes:** Both institutes have developed assessment processes in similar ways to CifA. Feedback suggests that proportionate effort to achieve chartered status is important to ensure a rigorous and meaningful process.
- **Raising the profile of the profession:** This is what is at the core of the process in both examples and for CifA. Chartership is, across the board, recognised as a meaningful accolade for a professional. We strongly believe this should be a benefit to the whole profession.
- **Chartered Ecologist is capable of being applied to professionals with a variety of roles and specialisms:** Some CifA members have raised concerns about how Chartered Archaeologist will be able to adopt assessment processes which reflect a variety of professional roles and specialisms. However, evidence from CIEEM shows that other professions already do this successfully. No chartered professional should be undertaking work for which they are not qualified.
- **CIEEM managed a limited rollout of the Chartered grade, starting with ex-presidents and Fellows:** CifA has not yet decided upon a strategy for the roll out of the Chartered grade. However, it is plausible that a similar limited approach will be necessary to ensure that the processes are robust and in order to manage demand in the early phases. These processes can be tailored to ensure a smooth transition for those seeking chartered status.

For further information about CifA's Charter and the Chartered Archaeologist proposals, visit [www.archaeologists.net/charter/chartered\\_archaeologists](http://www.archaeologists.net/charter/chartered_archaeologists) or email [chartered@archaeologists.net](mailto:chartered@archaeologists.net).